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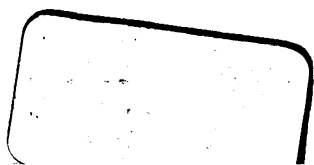
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W. H. Watson
FIFTH EDITION.

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS.

A Sacred Poem.

BY

WILLIAM EATON RUSHER, M.A.

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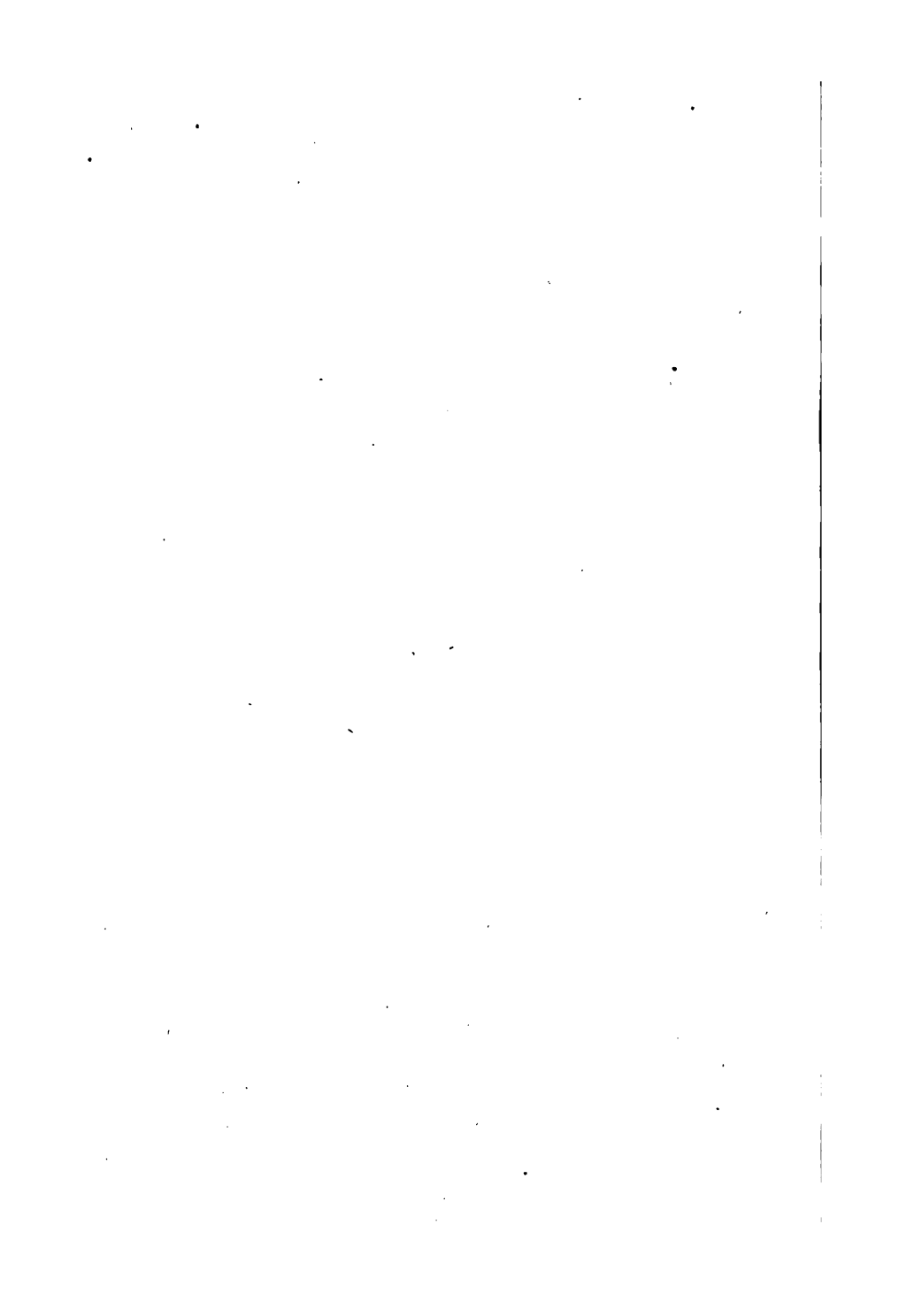


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BY T. COMBE, M.A., E. PICKARD HALL, AND H. LATHAM, M.A.

PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

MDCCLXXIV.



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AD 1864

In presenting the Fifth Edition of his little book, the Author begs to return his grateful acknowledgments to those Friends and Patrons who have treated it with so much kindness and favour.

St. John at Patmos.

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

ISAIAH vi. 8.

ISLE of the East ! upon whose dreary shore
A sainted Exile prophesied of yore :
Isle of the East ! upon whose groaning sod
The tyrant's victim and the felon trod,
And muttered heartwrung curses on the hand
That bade them pine and perish on thy strand :
Revengeful thoughts and tortured hearts were there,
And noble spirits crushed by dark despair ;
For their lost homes they heaved one last long sigh,
Then hopeless drooped, to sicken and to die !
Thy broken columns and thy crumbling fane
Start up like spectres on the Ægean main,

And sculptured figures on their time-worn stone
Are all the relics left of ages gone.
Say, Isle of Mourning! when the Saviour's name
As yet had kindled but a feeble flame ;
When Christian pilgrims numbered few on earth,
And glad salvation struggled into birth ;
When Judah's city lay a shapeless heap,
And over Zion hung a deathlike sleep ;
Saw you the heavens, flushed with crimson dye,
Part and reveal their awful mystery,
And the white clouds with lightning glory spread
On thy dark scenes a holier lustre shed ;
While choirs celestial raised their notes on high,
And strung the chords of seraph symphony,
And pealing hoarsely, hark ! the thunders roar
" JEHOVAH comes, JEHOVAH evermore !"

Such these the heralds of the Almighty will,
His vengeance or His mercies to fulfil :
Unseen they ride on every wind that blows,
From cold Arcturus to where Ganges glows ;
They stand upon the mountain's frowning steep,
Or swiftly pass along the restless deep ;
Or where at eve the convent maiden sings
Melodious praises to the King of kings ;

And gazing upwards on the Western sky,
Dreams that the promised land of rest is nigh—
That cherub bands are sporting o'er the lea—
And join exulting in her minstrelsy,
Then gently guide her on her heavenward road,
And bear her to the golden court's abode !
So angel hosts, when CHRIST the LORD was born,
Sang loud Hosannahs on that welcome morn,
And told to trembling ears the wondrous tale,
“ Hail ! Peace on earth !—Good will to mortals, hail ! ”

Yet not to all God's Revelations come,
Nor the dread import of our future doom :
His kindling Spirit warms not every heart,
Nor tongues of fire their magic power impart ;
But to the chosen vessels of his grace,
To Israel's fathers and to Israel's race,
To the sweet Psalmist and the captive Seer,
God's holy visions unfulfilled appear,
And great Isaiah's own prophetic voice
Bade Judah's offspring hope, repent, rejoice !
So when o'er Patmos burst the floods of light,
And Heaven revealed confused the dazzled sight—

Not to the world those mystic forms were shown,
But to one Exile, to one man alone ;
Him whom the Saviour loved, and loving blest,
And on his bosom closely, fondly pressed ;
The lowly sailor and disciple mild,
By nature meek, and guileless as a child ;
A heart whose tender sympathies e'er strove
By look and tone to speak its inborn love ;—
Love such as woman from her inmost soul
Pours out in touching softness past control ;—
Love such his Master felt for human kind,
That healed the sick and cured the halt and blind,
And taught to man the principle divine,
“ Let love in all your hearts and actions shine !”

On that most solemn day Christ calls his own,
And Christians worship GOD and GOD alone,
Sooth at the hour when morn's first ruddy glow
Fell on each careworn face and fevered brow,
Some quiet glen or beach remote he sought,
Alone, unseen, and lost in holy thought,
Perchance he mused on scenes and years gone by,
And once more traced the page of Memory :

Perchance he wandered by the stream of time,
Or stayed to contemplate some truth sublime,
Or joyed to think how on that morn was heard
The white-robed messengers' redeeming word ;—
“ Not here thy Lord ; seek not for Him beneath :
“ Christ lives once more triumphant over death ! ”
Then, mindful of that selfsame hour and day,
Turned to the East, and bowed him down to pray.

Lo ! dreamy visions wave before his eye,
And forms unknown move past mysteriously ;
A glorious halo circles all around,
And bright effulgence glows athwart the ground ;
And music, as when harps attune some strain,
Now far, now near, comes swelling o'er the main—
Strains not of earth, nor known to man below,
Celestial sounds untouched by time or woe.
A form of godlike radiance by him stands,
In robes of white, and girt with golden bands ;
His eyes were fire, and trumpet-toned his voice,
Whose thrilling accents make man's heart rejoice,
Yet fall upon the ear so sweetly still,
As the soft murmurings of some silvery rill :

" I AM the Mighty, Present, Future, Past,
" The Alpha and Omega, First and Last !
" To thee, first object of thy Lord's regard,
" To thee I come, and bring thy fit reward.
" When on the blood-stained cross my parting breath
" Anguished I drew convulsively in death,
" My Father's mission on this earth all done,
" And man's Redemption by my tortures won,
" I saw thee watching by my side, and there
" Consigned my weeping mother to thy care ;
" And when the hissing caldron yawned thy doom,
" I cooled the oil, and snatched thee from the tomb !
" And now, behold ! before thy wondering eyes
" Shall signs of times and things to be arise.
" 'Tis thine to tell to ages yet unborn
" The shadowed marvels of this sacred morn ;
" Mark well the vision,—mark ! and quickly note !"—
He said ;—and thus the Prophet saw and wrote.
" The Spirit bore me to the realms above,
" Where reigns supreme the Almighty God of Love.
" I saw Heaven's awful portals open stand,
" And dared to gaze within at God's command ;
" I, John of Patmos, saw His living Light,
" His gemlike splendours, pure, transcendent, bright :

- " Around his form effulgent glory shone,
- " And suns eternal blazed above His throne ;
- " While at His feet, upon a crystal flood,
- " Harp-tuning victors all-triumphant stood,
- " And far and near about that Throne of Light
- " A countless company moved day and night
- " Of saints and angels ever on the wing,
- " Who never, never cease to praise and sing :
- " ' O Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of rest !
- " In Thee we live, by Thee are ever blessed.
- " When Earth was not, Creation had no name,
- " Thou wert as now, and ever art the same !
- " For Thee yon world and stars and wandering spheres,
- " For Thee man's hopes and joys, man's smiles and tears :
- " These are Thy works, O Lord, or great or small,
- " Divine their being, for THOU madest all :
- " With boundless sway rules Thine uplifted hand
- " Alike the Heavens, the Ocean, and the Land :
- " Worthy thou art of honour, glory, praise !
- " To Thee we bow, for Thee our hymns we raise.'
- " I heard, and lo ! an angel stood beside,
- " And pointed upward through the ærial tide,
- " Midst lightnings' gleam and smoke and thunders' roll,
- " And bade me quickly write upon my scroll.

“ Seven seals were set, and each in mystic phase
“ Unveiled their symbols to my awe-struck gaze,
“ And dimly pointed out what was to be
“ In thy dark womb, O dread futurity !
“ I saw a Prince come forth, to whom was given
“ Rule and dominion by the will of Heaven ;
“ Forms of gigantic stature roamed on earth,
“ And warlike steeds that had no mortal birth ;
“ The sound of rushing waters, and the din
“ As of fierce struggles o’er a world of sin ;
“ The scorpion’s sting, the woman’s dire distress
“ And flight of terror to the wilderness ;
“ Death’s pallid charger swiftly moves along,
“ And lays his mark on many a festive throng :
“ Here deadly plagues and Famine’s shadowy hand
“ Spread desolation o’er a heathen land ;
“ There Ocean swoln with many a hideous wave,
“ Engulphs its victims in its yawning grave ;
“ And everywhere His mighty power is felt—
“ The valleys disappear, the mountains melt ;
“ Destroying angels execute His wrath,
“ And heap the wreck of empires on their path,—
“ Warn sinful man to bear the chastening rod,
“ And dread the vengeance of an angered God.

“ Hark ! sounds of strife ! There is in heaven a war,
“ And martial notes are ringing from afar :
“ Rebellious spirits dare to draw the sword,
“ Unfurl their banners, and defy their Lord.
“ O awful contest ! fierce and fell the fight !
“ When Michael's legions smote the Dragon's might,
“ And, by the Lamb's pure blood and innocence,
“ Like the swift whirlwind hurled him headlong thence ;
“ And swore by Him that sitteth on the throne,
“ For thee the joys of heaven are ever gone :
“ For thee no more await the realms of bliss,
“ But quenchless fires in yonder dread abyss ;
“ Yet for a while on earth the power thine
“ To tempt the sons of men from thoughts divine,
“ To win their hearts to ill, and lure each soul
“ To court thy smiles and own thy bland control :
“ Thou ! fallen Satan ! thou ! whose every breath
“ Breathed upon man renews the curse of death ;
“ Apostate Demon ! there shall dawn for thee
“ An hour that ends thy impious blasphemy ;
“ When all thy slanders, all thy lies shall cease,
“ And the vast Universe repose in peace ;
“ When Judah's Lion with an outstretched hand
“ Restores His people to their long lost land,

“ And in the noontide of eternal day
“ Sets Israel free and casts his cords away !
“ Yet ere that season, lo ! a wondrous sight !
“ Earth’s utmost bounds shall glow with heavenly light,
“ And seraph minstrels tune their harps once more,
“ And voices sing a song ne’er heard before :
“ Christ the Redeemer cometh forth to bless
“ The chosen children of His righteousness ;
“ With these a thousand years to sit and reign,
“ With these to dwell, with these to live again :
“ Chain Satan down, and cast fell Death without,—
“ Behold the Lamb of God ! exult and shout,
“ Ye Martyrs ! who have stemmed the Beast’s hoarse flood
“ And shed, a willing sacrifice, your blood ;—
“ Ye Saints ! who ever loved the Truth divine,
“ Whose hearts are Christ’s, and Christ your only shrine ;—
“ He comes ! rejoice, and join the heavenly throng,
“ And in His presence hymns of praise prolong !
“ Again my vision changed, and earth once more
“ Resumed its varied aspect as before :
“ A cloudless sky spanned o’er the distant isles,
“ And lit up sea and sky with sunny smiles,
“ And peaceful cities teemed with golden wealth,
“ And men rejoiced in sweet abodes of health.

" Hushed is the storm of war,—the voice of strife
 " And deeds of dark revenge no more are rife ;
 " A seeming calm pervades all life around,
 " And festive songs and mirthful scenes abound ;
 " While human skill with enterprising hand
 " Seeks out fresh wonders on some unknown strand,
 " Toils up steep Andes' side from Lima's site,
 " And scans the marvels of its mystic height,
 " Or strives to pierce where Arctic circles chain
 " The lifeless waters of the silent main ;
 " Progressive Arts put forth their utmost power,
 " And minds inventive triumph in that hour ;
 " But Art and Science, and all the wealth they win,
 " Are not true emblems of the peace within :
 " Securely tranquil, theirs no thought or fear
 " Of death impending or destruction near ;
 " They feel not, while they deem themselves so blest,
 " The poisoned arrow rankling in their breast ;
 " Deceitful Satan working out his will
 " By wiles and treachery for their deadly ill,
 " And smiles to think how easy is the prize
 " He claims for Hell and weans from Paradise ;—
 " Securely tranquil, they refuse to own
 " Not theirs the due, but His, and His alone ;

“ That all the joys of earth to man e’er given
“ Are but as naught compared with those of heaven.
“ Black clouds and thickening darkness gather round,
“ And earthquakes menace neath the quivering ground ;
“ Strange sounds are heard, tumultuous tempests roar,
“ And boiling billows lash the startled shore ;
“ Confusing tongues, loud shrieks of agony,
“ And terror-stricken shouts rend earth and sky ;
“ Man quakes with fear, and bids the mountains hide
“ His palsied members from yon molten tide,
“ And vainly strives to seek some sheltering spot,
“ Some place of refuge from—he knows not what !
“ Sudden it comes !—the lightning’s lurid glare
“ Marks out a scene of horror and despair !
“ It comes, it comes, to check man’s onward path,—
“ Great God ! ’tis here,—the dreadful day of wrath !
“ Then louder than ten thousand thunders’ roar,
“ Pealed forth th’ Archangel’s trump, ‘ Time is no more !’
“ The sun went out with a despairing look,
“ The moon and stars their wonted course forsook ;
“ The warrior’s steed that pawed the grassy plain
“ Stopped motionless, nor dropped a limb again ;
“ The bird that rests its pinions on the wave
“ Grew cold and chill, and voiceless as the grave ;

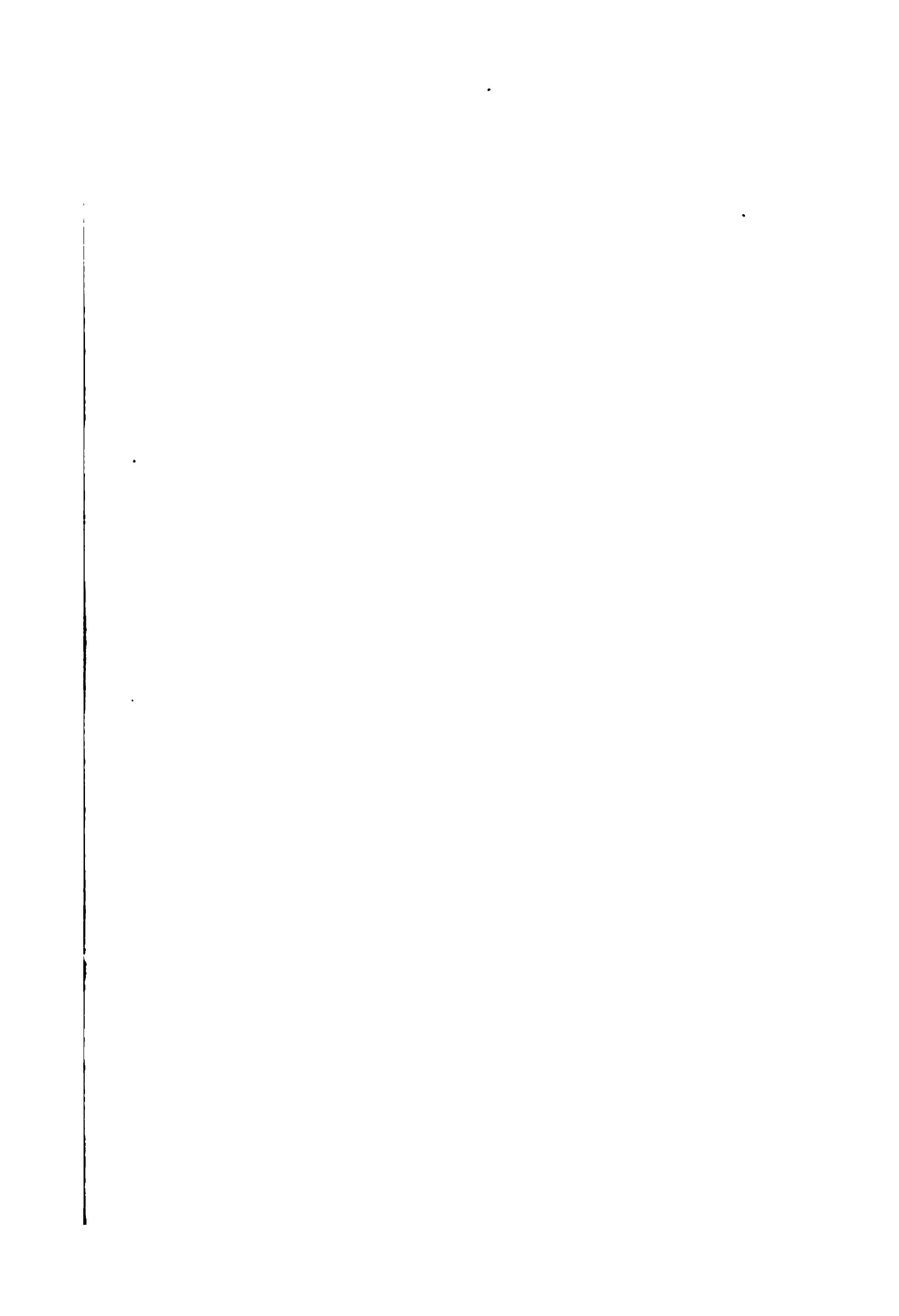
" The sails fell noiseless by the idle mast,
 " Nor moved in progress, though no anchor cast ;
 " The sheeted dead burst from their marble sleep,
 " And stood erect upon the rigid deep ;
 " The graves were rent, and saints and sinners all
 " Came forth obedient to that awful call ;
 " The king turned pale upon his throne with fear,
 " His trembling lips confessed Jehovah near ;
 " The peasant awe-struck stayed the half turned sod,
 " And once more called on his forgotten God :
 " With fervent heat the earth and sky decreased,
 " And Nature's bounteous smiles for ever ceased,
 " As midst consuming flames that hissed and curled
 " Rose the last wail of an expiring world !
 " Then came the Voice of Judgment from above ;—
 " ' Wrath for the wicked, for the righteous Love !
 " Ye who have sought transgression more than right,
 " Have chosen ways of darkness, not of light ;
 " Evil your aim, and sin your one desire ;
 " Go forth, ye cursed, into everlasting fire !
 " But ye, the faithful workers of my will,
 " Who hated wrong, and would my word fulfil ;
 " For you Death's reign is o'er, your sins forgiven ;
 " Come, share with me the eternal joys of Heaven !' "

'Tis past, and waking from his heavenly trance
The man of God cast round a trembling glance,
Half thought to see his Lord still lingering there,
Saw but the sunbeams flashing in the air ;
Then, mindful of that selfsame hour and day,
Turned to the East, and bowed him down to pray.



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